

CLAIMS

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A coin hopper comprised of:
 - a storing bowl for storing coins in bulk includes a movable wall section;
 - a rotating coin selection disk is operatively connected to the storing bowl;
 - the moving wall section provides an operative coin storing position mode and a coin release position mode;
 - the coins contacting the moving wall section do not slide towards the rotating coin selection disk in the coin storing position mode, however, coins slide towards the rotating coin selector disk in the coin release position mode.
2. The coin hopper of Claim 1, wherein the moving wall section is located adjacent the rotating coin selector disk.
3. The coin hopper of Claim 2, wherein the moving wall section forms a portion of a perimeter wall of the storing bowl.
4. A coin hopper comprised of:
 - a storing bowl for storing coins in bulk and includes a wall section that slants downward to enable a gravity feed of coins;
 - a rotating coin selector disk which is located adjacent a bottom of the storing bowl for selectively releasing coins;
 - a moving wall section is connected to a wall section of the storing bowl to provide one of a coin storing position and a coin release position, the coins contacting the moving wall section do not slide towards the rotating coin selector disk in the coin storing position, however, they do slide towards the rotating coin selection disk in the coin release position;
 - a coin amount detecting unit which detects a predetermined amount of coins above the rotating coin selector disk and outputs a refilling signal upon detecting the predetermined amount of coins; and
 - an actuator unit which operates the moving wall section to move from the coin storing position to the coin release position based on the refilling signal.

5. The coin hopper of Claim 4, wherein the rotating coin selector disk is driven by an electric motor,

when the electric motor rotates in a first direction, the rotating coin selector disk selectively releases coins and when the motor rotates in a second counter direction, the actuator unit is driven and the moving wall section moves from the coin storing position to the coin release position.

6. In a coin dispensing apparatus having a storage member for providing stored coins to a coin selection unit for dispensing, the improvement comprising:

a movable member selectively increasing the storage volume of the storage member when extended in a first direction to receive coins in an extended storage volume and releasing the stored coins when the extended storage volume is contracted in a second direction to enable coins to be released to the coin selector unit.

7. The coin dispensing apparatus of Claim 6 further including an actuator unit for driving the movable member from a coin storage position to a coin release position.

8. The coin dispensing apparatus of Claim 6 wherein the movable member is pivotably connected to a wall of the storage member.

9. The coin dispensing apparatus of Claim 6 wherein the actuator unit includes a screw jack member that can linearly extend and contract.

10. The coin dispensing apparatus of Claim 6 where the actuator unit is a spring member.

11. The coin dispensing apparatus of Claim 6 further including a detector unit for monitoring the amount of coins in the storage member to activate the actuator.

12. The coin dispensing apparatus of Claim 6 wherein the movable member is a wedge-shaped bucket member.

13. A storage member for a coin dispensing apparatus to store coins, comprising:
a housing member having a cavity for storing coins when mounted in a coin dispensing apparatus; and
a movable member operatively connected to the cavity of the housing member for increasing and decreasing the storage volume available for coins in the housing member.
14. The storage member of Claim 13 further including an actuator unit for driving the movable member from a coin storage position to a coin release position.
15. The storage member of Claim 13 wherein the movable member is pivotably connected to a wall of the storage member.
16. The storage member of Claim 13 wherein the actuator unit includes a screw jack member that can linearly extend and contract.
17. The storage member of Claim 13 where the actuator unit is a spring member.
18. The storage member of Claim 13 further including a detector unit for monitoring the amount of coins in the storage member to activate the actuator.
19. The storage member of Claim 13 wherein the movable member is a wedge-shaped bucket member.